

Schools' Forum Meeting 20 September 2022

Attendees:

Members

Carole Bradley (CB) (Primary - Large <50%) (Chair)
 Martyn Gordon (MG) (PRU)
 Lisa Grieg (LG) (Academy – Special)
 Mandy Hall (MH) (Academy Primary <25% FSM)
 Jo Heaton (JH) (Early Years)
 Sue Sharpe (SS) (Primary - Large Deprived)
 Chris Simmons (Academy – Governors)
 David Turner (DT) (Primary – Small)
 Lee Walker (Primary Academy > 50% FSM)
 Zoe Westley (ZW) (Special)
 Leanne Yates (LY) (Primary)

Local Authority Officers

Gemma Jones (GJ) (Scrutiny and Legal Support Officer)
 Sandra Shears (SSh) (Head of Finance – Corporate and Schools)
 Jo Stubbs (JS) (Administrator)
 Jane Watt (JW) (Children's Finance)
 Amanda Whitehead (AW) (Assistant Director – Education)

Agenda Item	Action
<p>1 Apologies -</p> <p>Apologies were submitted by the following:</p> <p>Sara Crawshaw (Academy – Secondary) Andrew Jordan (Academy – Secondary) Linda Richardson (Diocese – RC) Mark Tilling (Secondary) Laura Ovens substituting Danielle Swainston (Assistant Director)</p>	
<p>2 Minutes of the Last Meeting – 19 June 2022 - Minutes approved.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>High Needs Block Task and Finish Group – An update would be provided as part of the report later in the agenda.</p> <p>Growth Fund Update – A response had been received from the DfE. A meeting to discuss said response was due to take place this week.</p>	

	<p>High Needs Task and Finish Group – The Chair confirmed that they had met the previous week and had agreed that they would look through Peter Gray’s recommendations step by step. The group will split into two for the next meeting – the first group will discuss options for IPS funding and the second group will review options for specialist provision (special schools and ARPs).</p> <p>ZW requested information relating to the profile of children placed in independent. JW confirmed that this would be done where possible whilst avoiding the release of sensitive data.</p> <p>Early Years IPS SEND Funding – JW confirmed that this had been actioned with effect 1 September 2022..</p>	DS
3	<p>Schools Forum Membership Update</p> <p>SSh confirmed details of the Forum membership specifically relating to Academy and Diocesan representatives required updating and confirmation. Members agreed that the Chair should contact Neil Nottingham in his capacity as overall Academy representative. Members also agreed that once the membership was confirmed the current practice of members receiving a warning if they did not attend 2 meetings and failed to send apologies or appoint a substitute should continue. SSh advised that Forum would need to consider whether apologies should be accepted where there was failure to attend consecutive meetings and no substitute was provided.</p> <p>Decision – that academy representation is followed up. Post meeting note: Academy representatives met following the Forum meeting and progressed this.</p>	
4	<p>High Needs Block Projected Outturn 2022/23 (Quarter 1)</p>	
	<p>Members were given details of the High Needs Block projected outturn for 2022/23. In 2021/22 the final position had been a year end underspend of £386k . The allocation for 2022/23 was confirmed at £14.457m, an increase of £1.972m on the previous year. Based on quarter 1 spending the outturn was projected at being on Best Case Scenario an overspend of £197k and Worse Case Scenario an overspend of £613k This potential overspend was primarily owing to Independent School fees with all other high needs expenditure expected to come in close to budget..</p> <p>Members discussed their concerns around the increasing number of pupils with special needs who had been placed outside of Hartlepool and the knock on impact this had in terms of transport and associated costs. Members suggested that a representative from the Council’s transport department be invited to a future forum to discuss issues around fleet investment and a lack of qualified drivers and passenger assistants.</p>	

	<p>It was noted that while a new SEMH free school was planned for Hartlepool the current increase in numbers remained a concern.</p> <p>The Chair asked whether there was a plan to deal with the high needs block overspend. SSh advised that this was all part of the work being undertaken by the Task and Finish Group. It was noted that several local authorities are now operating with a significant high needs deficit and that the ESFA had released a DSG Management Plan tool to assist. Members requested that this be shared in terms of a plan to address the budget implications and how the plan was working to reduce the deficit.</p> <p>Decision – that the report and the budget amendment to reallocate £612k from Provision to Support Medium Term Financial Strategy budget to Independent School Fees budget be noted.</p>	
5	Indicative Schools Block Budgets 2023/24	
	<p>ESFA had published indicative National Funding Formula allocations for 2023/24. Based on pupil numbers and information from the October 2021 census they showed an allocation of £76.510m for 2023/24. However this would be amended based on information provided by the October 2022 census and would be reissued during December 2022 when it was forecast to reduce to £76.422m. This included a separate supplementary grant to help with the national insurance increase and rising energy costs. In previous years a transfer-in to the Schools Block from the Central School Services Block (CSSB) had become usual practice. The position on any transfer from CSSB for 2023/24 is currently under review and will be presented to Forum at their next meeting. No proposal for a transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block is expected. Regulations also allowed for a minimum funding guarantee and cap to be set so that excessive year-on-year charges could be protected against. In 2022/23 the MFG had been set at 2% with a cap of 3.33%. However the MFG for 2023/24 is regulated at a maximum of 0.5%. Details of the funding factor increases were appended to the report.</p> <p>Members asked for models in terms of the new capping percentage, with a specific eye to small schools and what this could mean across the school estate.</p> <p>Decision – That the formula changes for 2023/24 outlined in the report be noted.</p>	
6	Statutory Services provided by the Local Authority	
	<p>SSh set out the funding streams for statutory services provided for maintained schools and academies, details of which were appended to the report. Schools were being asked to fund central services at a consistent £60 per pupil, a rate which had not changed since 2017/18. If pay inflation</p>	

	had been imposed the rate would have been set at £72 per pupil for 2023/24. In 2022/23 the £60 rate had not been agreed by the Forum resulting in a disapplication request to the Secretary of State. If members were unable to approve the proposed £60 per pupil cost similar steps would need to be taken again. Members were therefore asked to consult with those maintained schools they represent in order to allow for a vote on 19 th October.	
7.	High Needs Task and Finish Group Update	
	<p>CB and SSh advised that during the first group meeting members had looked at a budget forecast for 2023/24 and Peter Gray's report and recommendations. The major issues identified had been cluster funding, the MFG for special schools and the Horizon school funding. The Chair referred to the discussions around the level of consistency in mainstream for pupils with SEND. There were also discussions around top up funding and how that could be managed.</p> <p>The Chair noted there had been a lack of mainstream school representation on the group. SS indicated she would be happy to attend. SSh advised that the next meeting was due to take place on Friday 30th September at 9am. The Chair would email all head teachers inviting them to attend.</p> <p>Decision – That the update be noted.</p>	
8.	Any Other Business	
	ZW highlighted the pressures being faced by schools resulting from increased costs for teachers and teaching assistants following the recent pay awards. JHe suggested that members provide specific examples of budgetary pressures there were facing in this area. Concerns were also raised around utility increases and free school meal funding which was currently not in line with inflation.	
9.	Date and Time of Next Forum Meeting	
	<p>Wednesday 19 October at 10am at CETL</p> <p>Members asked that a list of future meeting dates be sent out to the membership when confirmed and that future meetings up to June 2023 be scheduled.</p>	JS

OUTSTANDING ACTIONS LOG

Meeting	Description	Owner
N/A	<p>It was requested at the Schools Capital Sub group that membership of the Sub Group be kept on the agenda at the School Forum until replacements for those that have stood down have been found.</p> <p>The current situation is outlined below:</p> <p>2 x Primary Headteachers to represent all primary schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Turner - Headteacher, Rift House Primary School. • VACANT <p>1 x Secondary Headteacher to represent all secondary schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Tilling - Headteacher, High Tunstall College of Science. <p>1 x Special school Headteacher to represent the special education needs sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louise Robson – Head of Corporate Services, Catcote Academy. <p>2 x Academy Headteachers to represent all academies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carole Bradley – Headteacher, St Helen’s Primary School • Sara Crawshaw – Headteacher, English Martyrs School <p>1 x Church of England Diocese representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jo Heaton – Executive Headteacher Federation of St. Peter's Elwick CofE (VA) and Hart Primary Schools. 	All

	<p>1 x Roman Catholic Diocese representative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Frain - Headteacher, St Teresa's RC Primary School. 	
20 September 2022	Future meetings of the Forum be scheduled and details sent out to Forum members when the current membership is confirmed	JS

Financial Year 2022/23: Children’s Services Committee – Log of Schools’ Forum
Recommendations and Committee Decisions

Last Updated: 7 October 2022

Committee Date	Report	Recommendation and Decision Details